

## Leadership for Evaluation in 2014-15: A Syllabus for Success

During the first year of AchieveNJ implementation, the Office of Evaluation had direct contact with tens of thousands of educators and nearly every school district in the state. During these conversations, we have learned that districts that have embraced a collaborative and reflective approach to implementation reported the most positive impact of the new system. This document reflects some of the lessons learned from those districts, framing the topics as a month-by-month process through which district leadership groups can discuss relevant topics through a manageable, concise set of activities. We welcome your feedback at [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us).

### September – Starting Stronger

September is a good time to identify ways to identify areas for stronger implementation in 2014-15. This month's activity will provide a means to focus that conversation.

#### ⇒ Preparation:

- Read the following document: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/startingstronger14-15.pdf>.
- Use the graphic organizer below to note your thoughts as you read.

	What are the strengths in the district's approach in this area?	How can the district continue to improve in this area?
Include educators in two-way dialogue		
Create more efficient and effective observation and conferencing processes		
Recalibrate targets and improve assessments for Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)		
Improve training and connect professional learning opportunities to data		
Use outcomes from 2013-14 to set clear expectations for educators		

#### ⇒ Activity:

- Discuss the following questions at your administrative meeting:
  - What positive impacts of the new evaluation system did you see in 2013-14?
  - What area(s) from the Starting Stronger document might the district consider as a focus for effective implementation in 2014-15?

⇒ **Follow-up:** From the area(s) of focus cited above, identify specific action steps to move the work forward. Make certain that the action steps are assigned to particular school or district leaders.

## October – Promoting High-Quality Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)

*With the deadline of October 31 for setting SGOs, assuring high-quality SGOs should be a priority for all school leaders.*

### ⇒ Preparation:

- Read the following document: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOQualityRatingRubric.pdf>.
- Bring two SGOs of teachers with whom you work to your administrative meeting. Make certain you've deleted the teacher's name and removed any identifying characteristics.

### ⇒ Activity:

*At your administrative meeting,*

- Trade the two SGOs you brought to the meeting with a colleague.
- Review your colleagues' SGOs in light of SGO Quality Rating Rubric.
- Discuss your findings with your colleague and listen to your colleague's feedback.
- What strengths in the SGOs did you note? Where do you and your colleague have room for growth?

- ⇒ **Follow-up:** Identify common areas of professional learning for administrators who are leading SGO development in the district. Seek out resources or workshop opportunities from the [Office of Evaluation](#) or professional organizations that can help address those needs.

## November – Questioning, Discussion, and Student Engagement

*This past summer, more than 2,000 New Jersey educators attended an Office of Evaluation workshop on questioning, discussion, and student engagement strategies. The presentation (see link below) provides many resources for effective instruction.*

### ⇒ Preparation:

- Review the presentation, watching at least one of the selected videos about effective instructional strategies on slide 10, 12, or 28:
  - <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/ImprovingDiscussionQuestioningandStudentEngagementPresentation.pdf> (Note that a PowerPoint version of this presentation is available [here](#) at the bottom of the page.)
  - <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/ImprovingDiscussionQuestioningandStudentEngagementMaterials.pdf>

### ⇒ Activity:

- Discuss the following questions at your administrative meeting:
  - What have been the common areas for growth identified for teachers through the observation process?
  - What one or two (or more) resources from the presentation might be valuable to share with teachers?
  - How might the presentation and its resources be useful for educators in the district?

- ⇒ **Follow-up:** Consider possible next steps such as scheduling a turnkey training for teachers using the presentation above or publishing links to resources in faculty newsletters.

## December – Effective Observation Practices

*As the school year approaches the mid-year point, district leaders should ensure that observers have consistent expectations in classroom observations.*

### ⇒ Preparation:

- District leadership should:
  - Identify a sample classroom video to use in the activity. (See links to a selection of videos below or use one from your district), and
  - Select one member from the administrative group to serve as facilitator of this activity.
- The facilitator should view video ahead of time with one or two colleagues who are expert observers. This group should identify which components will be scored during the activity (as time may be limited), baseline scores for those components, and areas of focus for the debriefing.

### ⇒ Activity:

- Observe the video of the teaching episode as a group and individually record evidence using the district-adopted practice instrument.
- After the observation, individual evaluators should independently sort evidence and score for each component based on the evidence they collected. In addition to the rating, evaluators should be prepared to provide rationale to support their score.
- Once each evaluator has had a chance to score independently and identify evidence, the group should share and discuss element level ratings and rationale together. The facilitator must ensure that all conversation is grounded in rubric language and see that all participants use specific examples and evidence from the lesson when sharing.

### Scoring Debrief Norms

- Establish conversation time limits (e.g. dividing up time by major domains or areas).
- Every member should have an opportunity to share at least part of their scoring during the discussion.
- If the scores for a particular element are relatively similar, discuss the evidence that led to similar scores.
- If the scores are different, discuss the rationale for the scores in order to reach consensus by grounding the conversation in two questions:
  - *What does the rubric level descriptor say exactly?*
  - *What specifically did the teacher or students say and do?*
  - *Where does the preponderance of evidence fall?*
- Hold one another accountable to bias and interpretation.
- Repeat this process for each element.
- After completing the scoring, consider the reflection questions.
  - What elements were most challenging in reaching consensus? What caused this challenge?
  - Were there instructional practices that were interpreted differently?
  - How was this protocol helpful in aligning our instruction language and expectations?
  - Are there any significant next steps that have come from this conversation that need action steps?

⇒ **Follow-up:** Identify a volunteer from the district who is willing to be recorded while teaching. Utilize the protocol above and the video of the teacher later in the school year as a continuation of the process of observer calibration. Consider inviting teacher-leaders, DEAC members, or School Improvement Panel (SciP) representatives to participate in the discussion.

⇒ **Extra Credit:** Read “Ensuring Accurate Feedback from Observations” at <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/ensuring-accuracy-wp.pdf>.

⇒ **Sample Videos**

- **Elementary Example**

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/3rd-grade-ela-lesson>

- **Secondary – Math**

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/sorting-classifying-equations-overview> and <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/sorting-classifying-equations-discussion>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKyVjINaLVU&src\\_vid=DxuMgorzZKs&feature=iv&annotation\\_id=annotation\\_528204](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKyVjINaLVU&src_vid=DxuMgorzZKs&feature=iv&annotation_id=annotation_528204)

- **Secondary– ELA**

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/prepare-a-shakespeare-soliloquy>

- **Secondary – Other Subjects**

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/reading-like-a-historian-contextualization-complete-lesson>

## January – Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs)

*The Department will release 2013-14 Median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP) scores for appropriate teachers during early 2015. Districts should ensure leaders are prepared to answer questions about mSGP scores as they meet with those teachers to discuss final summative 2013-14 ratings.*

⇒ **Preparation:**

- Watch the video on SGPs at <http://survey.pcgus.com/njgrowth/player.html>
- Read the following documents on SGP: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGPOverview.pdf> and [http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq\\_eval.shtml#sgp](http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval.shtml#sgp). (Additional information on SGP will be published on the AchieveNJ web site during the school year.)

⇒ **Activity:**

- At an administrative meeting, discuss the following questions:
  - What aspects of the concept of mSGP do teachers most struggle with?
  - How can school and district leadership address teachers’ questions as mSGP scores are released and tied to summative ratings?
  - What must the district do to assure a smooth rollout of mSGP scores for those teachers who will be receiving them?

⇒ **Follow-up:** Schedule an information session for teachers on mSGP. Answer as many questions as possible, and e-mail any that couldn’t be answered to [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us). Create a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document based on teachers’ questions or simply make them aware of the Department’s [FAQ](#) on Student Growth Percentiles.

## February – Effective Feedback

*The AchieveNJ evaluation is much more about teacher support and growth than accountability. Ensuring that teachers receive useful feedback on their practice is an important responsibility of school and district leaders.*

### ⇒ Preparation:

- Read the following article by educator and author Grant Wiggins: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept12/vol70/num01/Seven-Keys-to-Effective-Feedback.aspx>.
- Review the key points of the article including Wiggins' assertion that effective feedback is
 

✓ Goal-referenced	✓ Tangible and transparent
✓ Actionable	✓ User-friendly
✓ Timely	✓ Ongoing
✓ Consistent	

### ⇒ Activity:

- Bring two observation reports that include feedback for teachers to your administrative meeting. Make certain you've deleted the teacher's name and removed any identifying characteristics.
- At your meeting, trade the two observations with a colleague.
- Review your colleagues' observation reports in light of Wiggins' 7 keys to effective feedback.
  - What has your colleague done well?
  - Where do you and your colleague have room for growth?

- ⇒ Follow-up: Identify common areas of professional learning in providing high-quality-feedback. Identify an administrator in your district who provides outstanding feedback and encourage him or her to develop a short refresher training on the topic for a subsequent meeting. Invite a highly-effective teacher from the district to participate in the discussion to offer input on feedback that helps to improve instruction.

## March – Time Management

*By early spring, the busy nature of the school year accelerates even more. This month's activity reminds leaders of a few effective approaches to using that most precious of resources – time – wisely.*

### ⇒ Preparation:

- Read at least one of following articles:

<http://www.marshallmemo.com/articles/Time%20Management%20PL%20Mar%2008.pdf>

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/admin/admin436\\_a.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin436_a.shtml)

[http://www.stancoe.org/scoe/iss/hs\\_admin\\_network/leadership/docs/10\\_ways\\_to\\_find\\_more\\_time.pdf](http://www.stancoe.org/scoe/iss/hs_admin_network/leadership/docs/10_ways_to_find_more_time.pdf)

### ⇒ Activity:

- Complete the following and share your ideas and suggestions at your administrative meeting:

*What are the one or two best ideas that you will take away from the article(s) you read on time management for educational leaders?*

*What are one or two strategies or tools that you already use to maintain your priorities and manage your time well?*

- ⇒ **Follow-up:** At a subsequent meeting, continue the conversation about time management by viewing and discussing this brief video – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODyG5IKbH08> – on the Time Management Matrix.

## April – Student Survey

*As teachers begin to plan for the end of the school year, they might take a moment to consider the value of student surveys as a means to get feedback on their practice.*

### ⇒ Preparation:

- View the following video featuring 2010 National Teacher of the Year Sara Brown Wessling: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/students-improving-teaching>
- Read the following document from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project on surveying students: [http://www.metproject.org/downloads/Asking\\_Students\\_Practitioner\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/Asking_Students_Practitioner_Brief.pdf)

### ⇒ Activity:

- Discuss the following questions at an administrative meeting:
  - Do any teachers in your school currently survey students as part of improving their practice?
  - If so, what have been their successes and challenges?
  - How might district or school leadership encourage the use of student surveys for teacher reflection and instructional improvement?
  - What might be some obstacles to broadening the use of student surveys and how might they be overcome?
- ⇒ **Follow-up:** Invite a teacher who has used student surveys to a subsequent administrative meeting to discuss how survey results impacted his or her teaching.

### ⇒ Extra Credit:

- Explore these other resources on student surveys:
  - <https://www.panoramaed.com/panorama-student-survey>
  - <http://mystudentsurvey.com/>
  - <http://tripodproject.org/>
  - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/education-survey-templates/>

## May – Reflection and continuous improvement

*Before the school year concludes, leadership teams should take time to reflect on the school year.*

### ⇒ Preparation:

- Read pages 8-31 of *Playmakers: How Great Principals Build and Lead Great Teams of Teachers* (<http://www.newleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/Playmakers1.pdf>) as a lens for end-of-year reflection.

### ⇒ Activity:

- Use the following organizing graphic from the assigned *Playmakers* section to frame your thinking on the following questions:
  - What are the strengths of school leaders in the district among the characteristics of great principals?
  - What are areas of growth for you individually and for school leaders in general in the school district?
- Discuss your responses with your colleagues.



- ⇒ **Follow-up:** Identify common areas for professional learning that can be addressed during summer planning meetings to help address the areas of growth noted above. Invite an expert colleague, a staff member from the Department of Education, or a representative from a professional organization to conduct the workshop.

## June – Celebrate!

*If you've completed this Syllabus for Success with your administrative colleagues, you've done some deep thinking about evaluation in your district. You're also nearing the end of the school year and completed many observations and other elements of the evaluation system. Now take a moment to celebrate, breathe, and plan a summer that will rejuvenate your energy and leadership for 2015-16.*